(c) The Government has taken up a project on Computerization of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) in the country. National Institute for Smart Government (NISG), Hyderabad, has been appointed as project consultant to study existing systems and processes, design technological solutions and prepare Detailed Project Report (DPR). After approval of the project, it is proposed to be first piloted in some States and thereafter implemented in rest of the States and UTs.

Universalisation of PDS and ration card

825. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:

SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would agree to Universalise the Public Distribution System and ration card to all; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Universalisation of Targeted Public Distribution (TPDS) and issuance of ration cards to all families or persons in the country cannot be agreed to by Government. This is because the TPDS is focused on poor households *i.e.* those living below poverty line, as determined by Planning Commission. The food subsidy presently being distributed in the form of highly subsidized foodgrains is intended for the BPL (including Antyodaya Anna Yojana) families only. They are distributed foodgrains @ 35 kg. per BPL family per month.

The foodgrains distributed under TPDS are procured for the Central Pool through Minimum Support Price Operations for food crops. Through this mechanism, the quantities of foodgrains which get procured for the Central Pool vary from year to year and are able to accommodate only the presently committed requirements under the TPDS, welfare schemes and for buffer stocks.

Universal coverage of all families/persons will result in loss of focus by TPDS on the poor and vulnerable sections of the society. At the present scale of issue of foodgrains to BPL families under the TPDS and their present issue prices, the quantities of foodgrains required to be procured, stored, transported and distributed for all families and for buffer reserves would be enormous and much beyond those acquired under MSP operations. That may necessitate even a total ban on private trade in foodgrains in the country. The quantum of food subsidy required will also be too high in comparison with its present level.

Prices of essential commodities

826. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:

SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what were the prices of Rice, Atta, Dal and Vegetables in the retail market on 1st August, 2004; and

(b) what are the prices of aforesaid materials in retail market on 1st August, 2008?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Prices of Rice, Atta, Dal and Vegetables in the retail market on 1st August, 2004 and as on 1st August, 2008 is given in the Statement.